

Reality doesn't just happen on television

GEAR UP is running strong and doing great things at Jackson County High School! The most recent activity, you ask? A Reality Fair involving students from the middle and high schools.



JCHS students participate in their Reality Fair.

Students were assigned a career based on their current grade point averages and were then required to use their "salaries" to manage and run their "households."

Overall, the Fair was a great success! More than 30 community members volunteered their time to help with the program. Many students realized that hard work really pays off.

GEAR UP also sponsors a student-run tutoring lab at Jackson County High two afternoons a week. Student tutors help peers in English and math. The JCHS goal for this tutoring opportunity is to help students become more confident in their math and communications skills, which will serve them well on standardized tests and in further academic pursuits.

Students and staff look forward to upcoming GEAR UP activities.

Heather Smith
Teacher, Jackson County

Principal's Pen: Creating a college going culture with GEAR UP and EPAS



The careers and lives that our students are preparing for in today's competitive economy require training beyond high school. If students are going to be successful in college, they must be prepared for college-level work. The college we are talking about is not just the four-year university, but also trade school, technical college, and two-year community college. To meet the challenge, it is critical that schools create a college-going culture.

GEAR UP and EPAS are two essential components in creating this college-going culture. EPAS is ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System. The EPAS system includes three tests: EXPLORE administered in the eighth grade; PLAN, administered in the 10th grade; and the ACT, which is given to 11th-grade students.

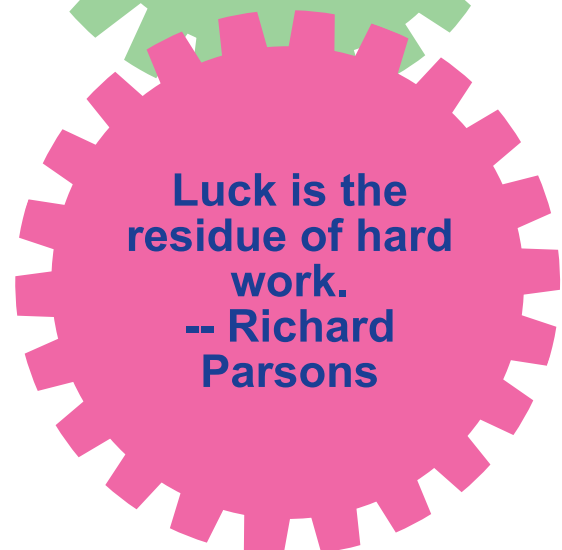
Each test measures student achievement and predicts the likelihood of success on the next level. The tests are extremely valuable because students and parents can compare results against the college readiness standards established by ACT. The student will receive a copy of the student report, which gives a list of individualized strategies that the student can use to improve his/her score.

The scores provided by the EPAS system become even more valuable when combined with GEAR UP initiatives because:

- GEAR UP counselors are able to identify and encourage students who have college potential but have expressed no interest in going to college.
- GEAR UP counselors are able to assist students with specific areas needed for improvement.
- Specific student weaknesses can be targeted for after-school tutoring and in-class interventions.

David Gilliam, Principal
Madison Southern High School
Berea College GEAR UP

GEAR UP ninth-graders – keep this information in mind since you'll be taking the PLAN test next year as tenth-graders!



An associate's degree may be your path to success

Before you follow all your friends to the four-year State U, make sure you check out your options. If going directly to a four-year college is right for you, great. But community college may be a better choice.

The four-year college is not the only path to success. A community college can help you start a career after just two years, with training for some of the fastest growing jobs in the U.S., or it can offer a start to your four-year degree, providing you with about half the credits you need to earn a bachelor's degree.

Benefits of attending a community college include:

- Courses that cover the basics but also apply principles to the workplace.
- Classes that are often more hands-on than those at a four-year college.
- Saving money in tuition and other expenses, such as room and board.
- Receiving more personal attention from the professors than at a large university.
- Another chance at four-year college scholarships. Many four-year colleges offer scholarships reserved for students who transfer from community colleges.

Source: ACT News You Can Use, February 2008